United Nations S/PV.5843

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5843rd meeting

Thursday, 21 February 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Arias	(Panama)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/26)

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08-24762 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/26)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Slovenia and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table. The representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/26, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure and an honour for me to introduce the third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), covering the period from 21 August 2007 to 7 January 2008.

As you know, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, had travelled to New York to brief the Council, but returned to Timor-Leste in the wake of the tragic events of 11 February, when President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão were attacked in Dili. Mr. Khare's presence and good offices during this sensitive period in Timor-Leste were considered essential.

The incidents of 11 February in Timor-Leste shocked the entire international community, as conveyed in the Secretary-General's statement that day. I am pleased to report that since our briefing to the Council following that event, the security situation has remained calm in Timor-Leste. In fact, there have been no further significant security incidents in the country.

I am relieved to report that President Ramos-Horta, while still hospitalized, is in stable condition and that doctors are hopeful that he will make a full recovery.

To ensure public order and to facilitate ongoing security operations to apprehend the perpetrators of the attacks of 11 February, the parliament endorsed the decision to extend the 48-hour state of siege declared on 11 February for an additional 10 days, until 23 February, and that could be extended still more. The state of siege imposes restrictions on night-time movement, a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. and a ban on public demonstrations. In taking those measures, the Government and parliament have acted with restraint and with full respect for constitutional provisions and human rights.

In close cooperation with UNMIT, the Government has, since the morning of 11 February, shown leadership in carrying out and coordinating security operations. In addition to efforts by the United Nations police and the international security forces —

the latter supplemented by an additional contingent of military and police personnel — the Government of Timor-Leste established, by Resolution No. 3/2008, approved by the Council of Ministers on 17 February, a joint command of the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) and the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) to undertake security operations during the state of siege. Based on discussions between the Special Representative and the Government and an exchange of letters with the Prime Minister dated 21 February, it has been agreed that those PNTL officers who participate, for a limited period of time, in the operations undertaken by the Joint Command would not be under the direct supervision and responsibility of the UNMIT Police Commissioner, who also serves as interim PNTL general commander, during that period.

All other elements of the supplemental policing arrangement between the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations remain unchanged. Within the framework of the Trilateral Coordination Forum, new mechanisms have been established to enhance coordination between the F-FDTL, PNTL, UNMIT police and international security forces. As of 19 February, a daily meeting between the commanders of all four security institutions is being held. Further, as of 18 February, two daily meetings are being held between the UNMIT Police Commissioner and the Commander of the international security forces within the context of a new committee for the coordination of international assistance.

(*spoke in English*)

Immediately following the attacks, Timorese leaders from all parties came together to urge calm, and the country has remained peaceful, including throughout the funeral ceremonies for fugitive Alfredo Reinado and one of his accomplices who died during the attack on the President's residence. The UNMIT police and the PNTL, in coordination with the international security forces and F-FDTL, have remained on high security alert and have launched an investigation into the attacks against the President and the Prime Minister.

Before proceeding with an update on developments since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report, I would like to share some observations on the tragic attacks on the President and the Prime Minister. While the full effect of these events is not yet known, the stability of a State cannot be measured only in terms of the occurrence or absence of outbreaks of violence or emergencies, but also by how the State addresses such challenges. As conveyed in our last briefing, it is reassuring that, following the 11 February events, the Timor-Leste Government, the parliament, all political parties — including in the opposition — security institutions and the population at large responded with calm and restraint and with due respect for the Constitution and the rule of law. What some feared might have deteriorated into a destabilizing crisis did not happen, with the institutions of the State and citizens showing strong resilience. All political leaders of the country and the general population will hopefully continue to refrain from politicizing these terrible events.

Of course, the 11 February incidents raise some serious security-related issues which will need to be addressed. Nevertheless, the course of events over the past 10 days reinforces the importance for UNMIT, in partnership with the Timorese, to continue focusing efforts on the four priority areas outlined in the Secretary-General's report, that is, the review and reform of the security sector, the strengthening of the rule of law, economic and social development and the promotion of a culture of democratic governance.

While the pressing problems of the petitioners are not yet resolved, the group of petitioners that began gathering in Dili two weeks ago in response to the Government's call to pursue discussions on the resolution of their grievances has continued to increase in number, reaching about 155 by mid-week, and more are expected. In the wake of Reinado's death, the Government is intensifying outreach efforts to those who had been his followers to join these discussions, in the hope that the tragic events of 11 February might serve as a turning point in the process.

The visit of the Security Council mission last November and the mid-December visit of the Secretary-General to Timor-Leste reflected the continuing strong support of the international community for the Timorese people, with both being the first such visits since the restoration of the country's independence over five years ago. As had been highlighted by the Security Council, the Secretary-General emphasized that intensified efforts to promote dialogue to defuse existing tensions and foster greater political consensus, as well as the strengthening of inclusive democratic processes, will

be essential for achieving sustainable stability and prosperity in Timor-Leste. Both visits therefore underscored the importance of further progress towards implementation of the commitments made by all parties within the context of the political party accord of 26 May 2007. As members know, the accord specified inclusiveness and participation as basic principles of good governance, as well as the need to ensure a meaningful and constructive role for the opposition in parliament and the participation of civil society in the political, economic and social development process of the country.

It is promising that, since those high-level visits, serious efforts in this direction have been undertaken under the leadership of President Ramos-Horta, who curtailed his official visit to Brazil by a few days to return to Dili on 3 February.

In a 17 January meeting, President Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister Gusmão, FRETILIN President Lu-Olo Guterres and FRETILIN Secretary-General Alkatiri had constructive discussions on the establishment of possible mechanisms for promoting more inclusive approaches for addressing the country's pressing problems. On 7 February, the President convened another meeting, at his home, between the leaders of the four parties comprising the Government coalition, the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) and FRETILIN to further discuss mechanisms for collaboration to jointly address such pressing problems as the internally displaced persons (IDPs), the petitioners and the then fugitive Reinado, as well as critical longer-term issues of security sector review and reform and strengthening of the justice sector and of public administration.

By all accounts, that 7 February meeting was another positive step forward, with the parties reaching consensus on the desirability of such a mechanism and looking forward to further talks the following week. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 7 February, FRETILIN Secretary-General Mari Alkatiri positively referred to progress made in those discussions and the efforts of all concerned to foster an inclusive and participatory environment to enable the country to move forward. President Ramos-Horta himself has played a crucial role in bringing the parties together, and I hope that the parties will continue to come together to keep the positive momentum going while he is recovering. UNMIT will continue with its good offices to facilitate that process.

Constructive efforts were made by the President of the National Parliament, Fernando "La Sama" de Araújo, to promote the establishment of an ad hoc all-party parliamentary commission to address the pressing issues of the IDPs and the petitioners. UNMIT supported those efforts and, while this particular initiative has for the time being been overtaken by events, UNMIT will continue to support all such initiatives to enhance inter-party cooperation.

Other mechanisms established earlier have also been utilized to promote dialogue on critical issues facing the country, notably, the weekly bilateral meetings of the Special Representative, respectively with the President, the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of FRETILIN, as the party with the largest number of seats in parliament; the Special Representative's regular meetings with the President of the National Parliament, leaders of political parties and civil society; and the fortnightly meetings of the High-Level Coordination Committee and the Trilateral Coordination Forum. At the request of FRETILIN, the Special Representative also hosted a meeting on security sector review and reform for the party's leadership on 6 February, during which agreement was reached to hold fortnightly working-level meetings to exchange views and contribute to the process.

As reflected by resolution 1704 (2006), the mandated tasks of UNMIT are wide-ranging — understandably so, given the multifaceted challenges confronting Timor-Leste. In that connection, let me briefly touch upon some of the key issues raised in the Secretary-General's report. Security sector reform is a long-term process that must be approached in a holistic manner, taking account of a wide range of factors. Broad input of civil society into the security sector reform process will contribute to a sense of public ownership needed to support the further development of security forces, which act in an impartial manner with due respect for human rights. The Government-led and United Nations-supported country-wide survey to ascertain the views of the Timorese population on the security sector is a vital element to ensure the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders.

As emphasized in the Secretary-General's report, following the 2007 elections the UNMIT police has devoted increasing attention to the reform and rebuilding of the national police. With the completion of the screening process, UNMIT police has focused more on the professional development of individual

PNTL officers through training and mentoring, as well as on the institutional strengthening of the PNTL as an impartial, professional and reliable service. I would like to reiterate the need for police-contributing countries to provide officers with the required expertise in training and mentoring, including women officers, which is also important in view of the high incidence of gender-based violence in the country. I would also note that the ratio of women officers within the PNTL is four times that of the UNMIT police. Until the PNTL has more fully developed its capacities, a continued strong UNMIT police presence, including the four formed police units, will be essential to ensure stability in order to build on the gains made over the course of the current mandate period.

On 4 February, PNTL assumed command of three police posts in Dili under the continued supervision and guidance of UNMIT police, who remain stationed in those posts, though in reduced numbers. The outcome of that pilot handover and lessons learned will be taken into account in proceeding with the gradual phased transfer of law enforcement responsibility to the PNTL throughout the country. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, the progress of the phased transfer will depend in part on increasing capabilities of individual PNTL officers through consistent and structured mentoring processes, as well as physical co-location. As police posts, and eventually districts, are handed over to the PNTL, UNMIT police officers, within the authorized strength, will be progressively deployed to sub-districts and specialized units — such as the Border Patrol Unit — which currently do not benefit from their full-time presence. The expert mission which will travel to UNMIT in late March to conduct a thorough assessment of PNTL requirements, as well as possible adjustments needed to UNMIT police skill sets, will be crucial for further refining those initiatives.

While the reform and rebuilding of the PNTL is a process that will take some years, progress over this year will be critical in determining the direction and strategies to be followed over the long term. In going forth with assistance to rebuild the PNTL, UNMIT police efforts must be part of a larger holistic strategy developed by the Timor-Leste Government in coordination with the broader international community, whose bilateral assistance will also remain essential in the medium and long terms. As with any UNMIT mandated tasks, the understanding and support of the Timorese population are an important and key element for success. To that end, in January the UNMIT Police Commissioner and other senior police officers participated in a series of public outreach meetings with civil society groups across the country.

The Timorese police service is one component of the larger rule of law architecture that includes the courts, the Office of the Prosecutor-General, public defenders and the corrections system, as well as the legal framework, all of which are in need of enhanced international support if the increasing backlog of cases is to be tackled and the credibility of the justice system bolstered in the eyes of the Timorese people.

To ensure access to justice, to determine the truth, to establish credible accountability for crimes committed, to provide compensation for victims and to establish proper precedents for the future are all vital elements that remain of paramount concern. As a positive step in that direction, UNMIT and the Timor-Leste Government signed on 12 February an agreement concerning United Nations assistance to the Office of the Prosecutor-General to complete outstanding investigations of the former Serious Crimes Unit. Investigations have already begun. Despite constraints faced by the judicial system, notable progress is also being made in implementing the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry report. UNMIT also remains prepared to provide assistance to the Government and Parliament regarding the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation of Timor-Leste.

Even though UNMIT's mandated tasks do not directly include assistance for the further development of the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL), it will be crucial for the cohesive functioning of the security sector as a whole to further strengthen its institutional capacities, policies and processes. Furthermore, the development of cooperative relations and trust between the PNTL and F-FDTL is vital to improve inter-operationability between those security institutions, as well as for the progressive assumption of law enforcement responsibility by the PNTL. Sustained international support will thus be important for the continued efforts of the F-FDTL command, under the leadership of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, to further develop the Armed Forces so that they can discharge their military role appropriately for a peacetime setting.

Timor-Leste faces two interlinked humanitarian challenges: the resolution of the situation of the remaining 100,000 IDPs throughout the country, with 30,000 in camps in Dili, and addressing longer-term and chronic vulnerabilities that may have a direct humanitarian impact on the overall population. The IDP situation is a political and security concern, as well as a humanitarian one, and largely considered as neither short term nor easily fixed. On 12 January, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Khare joined President Ramos-Horta, President of the National Parliament Fernando de Araújo, Prime Minister Gusmão and F-FDTL Commander Ruak in a meeting with the IDPs, which was the first such meeting with the current national leadership. Further, on 25 January, the Prime Minister and Minister for Social Solidarity held a meeting with IDP camp managers. UNMIT has and will continue to actively encourage such initiatives, as well as the appeal of the Prime Minister to the IDPs that all people of Timor-Leste need to rise above partisan politics to resolve such critical issues facing the country.

A durable solution to the IDP situation, through voluntary return or relocation, will require a holistic approach that depends on a number of factors, including, among others, an improved security environment, a strengthened legal framework for resolving land and property disputes, and economic regeneration and livelihood activities. As mentioned earlier, I am pleased that, as a first step forward in the transition from blanket food assistance towards targeted assistance to the vulnerable, food rations distributed to the IDPs have been reduced as of February by 50 per cent without any major security incident, although just over half of the beneficiaries have refused the reduced rations.

The chronic and longer-term vulnerabilities in the country include its susceptibility to natural disasters. Just this past month, parts of the country were hit by severe storms. According to the Disaster Operations Centre, over 700 houses were damaged or destroyed. Those events, and a locust infestation, also caused significant crop damage that may have implications for food security. The United Nations and other international partners assisted the Government in an assessment of and response to the damage, but the country needs to strengthen its institutional capacities for dealing with such events. Other factors, including chronic food insecurity, can also adversely affect the humanitarian situation. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme estimate that 20 per cent of the population is food insecure and that a further 23 per cent is highly vulnerable to becoming food insecure.

Furthermore, rural livelihoods are fragile and create the potential for migration to urban areas ill-prepared to deal with expanding populations.

Short- and medium-term employment programmes continue to be desperately needed. Despite the country's considerable oil revenues, the existing legislation regarding the management of the petroleum development fund limits the amount of resources that can flow to the State budget and does not allow for front-loading of expenditures, as might be required to kick-start the economy and address urgent socio-economic issues.

In his report to the Council, the Secretary-General noted that the functioning of the parliament, the Government and other State institutions demonstrated progress in building on the gains of the peaceful electoral process, as well as a commitment to restore normalcy following the 2006 crisis. The Secretary-General also emphasized the need to address critical political and security-related issues through inclusive and collaborative processes, and the importance of a meaningful and constructive role for the opposition.

Let me say in conclusion that, confronted by the tragic events of 11 February, the Government, the parliament and the opposition acted in an exemplary manner, and State institutions did indeed function according to the constitution. That is indeed encouraging. But the fact that Timor-Leste came so close to a real breakdown shows how important and urgent it is to address a number of issues: the remaining Reinado supporters, who are under arrest warrants; the petitioners; and the internally displaced persons.

Those pressing issues have been unresolved since the crisis of 2006. Each, in and of itself, should be solvable with a concerted effort across the political spectrum. Recent efforts led by President Ramos-Horta — to which I have referred — to bring together FRETILIN and the Government coalition were promising and need to continue. Solving those immediate issues will allow the country to give its full attention to the core underlying socio-economic

challenges — in particular widespread poverty and massive youth unemployment — that, if not addressed, will continue to threaten the political stability of Timor-Leste

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his important briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Santos (Timor-Leste): First, allow me to convey to the Council the regrets of Deputy Prime Minister José Luis Guterres, who had travelled to New York last week to attend this debate. But, as we all know, the incidents of 11 February compelled his early return to the country.

After the comprehensive and insightful presentation by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, and given the constraints of time, I shall read out only part of my statement. The full text will be circulated in the Chamber.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, allow me to express our gratitude for the convening of emergency meeting immediately following the attempted assassination of the President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Timor-Leste (see S/PV.5833). That was indeed a tragic event and an attack against the democratically elected leaders of my country.

Subsequent to the failed attacks, the Government took measures to capture the perpetrators and bring them to justice, in strict observance of our constitution and domestic laws. The Government is fully committed to adhering to the highest standards of human rights in its efforts to resolve the situation. An investigation is under way to ascertain the facts that led to the attempted assassination of the President and the Prime Minister.

In addition, allow me to inform the Council that President Ramos-Horta is under excellent medical care in Darwin, Australia, and is on the road to recovery. On behalf of President Ramos-Horta and his family, I wish to convey their gratitude for, and acknowledgement of, the thousands of messages of sympathy and good wishes they have received from all corners of the world. In particular, I wish to thank the Secretary-General, representatives of Member States, members of the Secretariat and all others who have expressed their solidarity and good wishes.

We profoundly thank the Australian Government for attending, through the International Security Forces, to the President's immediate medical needs in Dili, and for providing the best medical care possible, which promptly enabled his clinical stabilization. Without that treatment, the outcome could have been far more tragic for the people of Timor-Leste. We would also like to thank the Government of Australia, and in particular Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Foreign Minister Stephan Smith, for responding immediately to our request for increased security measures in Timor-Leste.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our good friend Ambassador Kumalo for his leadership of the core group on Timor-Leste. In response to a speech delivered in February 2007 by then Prime Minister Ramos-Horta in this very Chamber, Ambassador Kumalo stated that Timor-Leste might not be the centre of the universe, but that for South Africa, Timor-Leste was indeed the centre of the world. A year later, we know that Ambassador meant exactly what he said.

Last November, my country was honoured with a visit by a Security Council mission, led by Ambassador Kumalo. A few weeks later, another high-level visit was conducted by the Secretary-General himself. Those two visits demonstrated the continuing commitment and support that Timor-Leste enjoys from the United Nations and the international community five years after the restoration of independence. Moreover, both visits provided an ideal opportunity to engage with local stakeholders while at the same time experiencing at first hand developments and challenges facing our nascent democracy. The positive impact of the two visits is evident.

A continued United Nations presence remains crucial for consolidating peace and security, as well as for highlighting our collective role and responsibility in resolving the causes of the crisis. At the same time, we need to thwart the perception that we are becoming too dependent upon the international community to solve our own internal problems.

My Government expresses its profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2008/26), as well as to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his insightful presentation. The Government of Timor-Leste fully accepts and strongly supports the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's

report. The extension of the mandate for a year, maintaining the same broad objectives and the current strength, meets the needs and expectations of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste.

As reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, the root causes of the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste still need to be addressed. We agree that Timorese leaders must put aside their political differences and focus on resolving the manifold challenges facing the country, including the challenges of the internally displaced persons and petitioners. The future of our country depends largely upon resolving the root cause of the crisis.

The current Government took office six months ago, with an agenda to reform and develop the country. We have made significant advances in rebuilding our institutions — the police and the judiciary in particular. Although slow, that progress affirms our commitment to rebuilding our own capacity. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste has been an invaluable enabling factor. But the success or failure of our objectives rests entirely with us, not with the international community. Needless to say, the Council's ongoing support in the crucial areas of democratic governance, socio-economic development, the rule of law and security sector reform greatly increases our chances.

In conclusion, in my country we differ in our political views — which is rather normal and is a part of our young democracy. But we are united in our recognition of the invaluable contribution of the United Nations and the need for its continued and sustained presence in the country. Resolving our problems will take time, and time is crucial for consolidating the peace and stability achieved thus far, so that development can replace the air of uncertainty that many of us feel today.

Finally, allow me to express our utmost gratitude and sincere appreciation to the men and women of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, under the able leadership of our friend Mr. Atul Khare, for their dedication and sacrifices. We congratulate them for doing such an excellent job.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to members of the Council.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Santos for updating the Council.

The United States deplores the recent attacks on President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão by the rebel group associated with dissident Alfredo Reinado. They constituted an unacceptable assault on the Timorese Government.

We welcome the decision of Australia, in response to this crisis, to send 200 additional troops to strengthen the International Security Forces an addition that has provided a backbone for efforts to restore and maintain stability in the area. We also thank Australia for its full medical and military support.

These recent attacks underscore the necessity of achieving accountability for the 2006 crisis. That is central to establishing law in Timor-Leste. To meet that goal, we encourage implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, including bringing those responsible for crimes to justice under domestic law.

We concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation of a one-year extension of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), as composed at present. UNMIT is playing a vital role in ensuring and restoring stability in Timor-Leste. We will depend on UNMIT to continue its support for the Timorese in developing the capacity of the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL), achieving accountability for the 2006 crisis and strengthening the justice sector in the coming year.

The recent past underscores the importance of developing professional and effective police and military forces under civilian control, in order to provide the security necessary for political stability and economic development. In that regard, we appreciate UNMIT's ongoing efforts to promote security sector reform. With a view to long-term stability and growth, we appreciate UNMIT's efforts to develop the effectiveness of the Timorese justice system and encourage additional assessments of justice sector needs.

Despite recent challenges, it will be important for UNMIT to retain its welcome focus on the prevention of gender-based violence and attention to the needs of victims.

Finally, we join the Secretary-General in calling for reconciliation among Timorese political leaders and parties and for coordination in addressing the challenges facing the country. We express our appreciation for Special Representative Khare's efforts to facilitate such a dialogue.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): As members are aware, Croatia has aligned itself with the European Union statement on this topic. Nevertheless, we would like to make some additional remarks.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 and reaffirm our support for the new Government. However, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing fragile situation, especially in the light of last week's events. We strongly condemn the recent assassination attempt on Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, and the attack on the convoy of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão.

In that regard, we also have unique insight into this matter through our engagement in the United Nations police in East Timor. We stress that it is important that all parties fully cooperate in the investigations so that those responsible for this attack can be brought immediately to justice.

This only demonstrates the importance of continued coordination efforts among the Timorese leadership, the political parties and civil society to bridge existing gaps. Such efforts are crucial to maintain stability and to strengthen democratic governance and respect for the rule of law. We recognize the value of coordinated work to review the future role of the security sector, given its importance for long-term stability.

We would also like to emphasize the significance of establishing accountability for crimes committed during the 1999 and 2006 crises. We welcome the important progress in the promotion and protection of human rights that has been achieved in a number of areas. However, we are concerned about still-inadequate standards in combating domestic and gender-based violence and the peaceful return of internally displaced persons. In that regard, we encourage the international community to assist the Government of Timor-Leste in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

In that connection, we would also like to express support for the Secretary-General's initiative to send an expert mission to the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which will provide an assessment regarding possible adjustments to UNMIT's police component. We support the efforts of Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and the continuation of the Integrated Mission to build on the progress achieved thus far. The mission's presence is crucial in order to encourage the East Timorese Government to address existing challenges.

Therefore, we firmly and strongly support an extension of UNMIT's mandate for the next 12 months.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): First, I would like to thank Ambassador Nelson Santos, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, for his statement. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing on the situation following the attacks on the President and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, and for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26).

The report indicates that, in the context of the many difficulties that they are facing in the first year of the new Government and parliament, the people and the public institutions of Timor-Leste have made many efforts in their nation-building and recovery processes. However, the report also indicates that progress is limited: apart from that made in the performance of parliament, the Government and other State institutions in the areas of policymaking and political debates, little can be found in other domains of activity.

We agree that Timor-Leste continues to face numerous challenges, as noted by the Security Council mission that visited the country last November. The recent attacks targeting the President and the Prime Minister — attacks that members of the Council have strongly condemned — tell us only that, while there has been overall improvement, the security situation and the political situation remain fragile. That, combined with the weakness of institutions and the lack of cooperation among political leaders and parties, makes the task of tackling, on a daily basis, pressing problems such as widespread poverty and unemployment, the housing crisis, the great number of internally displaced persons and crime even more challenging.

In expressing our support for and solidarity with the people and the Government of Timor-Leste — and mindful of the observation of the Security Council mission that, unless the differences among the Timorese leaders are resolved, political uncertainty will persist, together with the prospect of renewed violence and bloodshed — we call upon all parties concerned to exercise restraint and to actively engage in peaceful dialogue to address differences, together promoting the process of national reconciliation and development, in the national interest of Timor-Leste and in the interest of peace and stability in the region.

In the context of the present situation, we consider that the continued assistance of the international community is necessary. The visits of the Secretary-General and the Security Council mission have reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to Timor-Leste at this critical moment. In that regard, we commend the efforts of UNMIT and various United Nations agencies in support of the peace and development process in Timor-Leste over the past year in the many fields of their activities.

At the request of the Government of Timor-Leste, and upon the recommendation of the Secretary-General, Viet Nam supports an extension of UNMIT's existing mandate in order to enable it to accomplish its tasks. We welcome UNMIT's plan for a phased handover of policing responsibilities to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste in order to enhance the capacity of the Timorese authorities in maintaining security with a view to long-term stability.

Before concluding, let me once again, on behalf of my Government, extend to President José Ramos-Horta our best wishes for a quick and full recovery to allow him to resume leadership of the country at an early date, consolidate peace and implement the national strategy for recovery.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, for his informative briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report. My delegation also deeply appreciates the important statement by the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, Ambassador Nelson Santos.

The recent news of the armed attacks against President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão causes us profound concern and pause. We hope that President Ramos-Horta makes a swift recovery and will be able to resume his duties at an early date.

We unreservedly condemn those attacks. They constitute nothing less than an assault on Timor-Leste's democracy. We praise the quick and effective actions taken by the leadership of Timor-Leste to prevent escalation of this grave situation. The leaders and people of Timor-Leste have demonstrated their wisdom in responding to the situation by exercising restraint in their actions in the interest of maintaining peace and stability. These latest deplorable events underscore the need for the continued support and engagement of the international community.

The Security Council mission to Timor-Leste last November and the visit by the Secretary-General provided us with a window into the current situation there and a lucid and candid assessment of the key concerns and issues that the country is facing. Together with the current report of the Secretary-General, they provide a basis for us to recalibrate the priorities and approaches of the United Nations Mission's programmes and activities in the country to better suit the current realities and help reverse the setbacks that have occurred there since 2006.

By far the most critical issue in the country would appear to be restoring peace and security and building sounder foundations for long-term stability. In this regard, it is extremely important for the United Nations Mission in Dili to continue, as a matter of high priority, to support Timor-Leste in fully addressing the unresolved root causes of the 2006 crisis, including political divisions, weak institutions — especially the national police and the security forces — and poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth.

It is equally important for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) to support the efforts made and the approach adopted by the Government in resolving some grave issues remaining from the 2006 crisis that continue to contribute to the fragility of the security situation in the country, such as internally displaced persons, petitioners and fugitives.

We appreciate the good offices efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to enhance dialogue among the leadership and facilitate a consensus approach in addressing the various problems.

We believe that with the strong determination and untiring efforts made in a united manner by the leadership of Timor-Leste, and with re-energized and more focused assistance from UNMIT and other partners, the serious challenges that the country is facing can be overcome. It is only then that progress made so far in the country's State-building can be consolidated and its economic development reinvigorated.

In practical terms, it is important for UNMIT to focus on supporting the Government's programme on short-term priorities contained in its 2008 budget. Their effective implementation would have durable impact on stabilization in the country. We place importance on UNMIT's continued role in cooperating and coordinating with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other relevant partners in order to support the implementation of the Government's national recovery strategy.

Another important note is the issue of expediting security sector reform. We support the Secretary-General's plan to gradually transfer the responsibility for police operations from the United Nations police to the national police of Timor-Leste and to emphasize training and mentoring assistance from the United Nations police.

There is a great need for UNMIT to support national capacity-building efforts and to shore up the ability of the Government and other State institutions to function in their proper roles. That includes the need to strengthen the full range of political, judicial and economic institutions and infrastructure so that democratic governance can thrive. As a general note, we attach great importance to the concepts of ownership of and leadership by the Government and people of Timor-Leste in the planning and implementation of United Nations assistance in this regard. Therefore, in the light of those considerations, Indonesia supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General for the extension of UNMIT's mandate for a period of 12 months.

We are pleased to inform the Council that Indonesia and Timor-Leste continue to enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship. We also witness continuing superb rapport among leaders of both countries. The Government and people of both countries continue to deepen and expand cooperation on the basis of forward-looking and reconciliatory principles.

In conclusion, we wish to reaffirm my Government's strong commitment to continue to assist Timor-Leste on a bilateral basis in achieving peace, stability, and prosperity for a democratic Timor-Leste.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing. Costa Rica welcomes the improvement in the state of health of President Ramos-Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, as was the President of Costa Rica, a situation that was made possible by the very close friendship between them. We hope that he will be able very soon to return to his work in furthering the peace, stability and development of the Timorese people.

We believe that no signs of fanaticism or violence will stand in the way of Timor-Leste as it takes its first steps on the path of independence. The international community should provide the necessary support so that that can be reality. For this reason, this debate is particularly important because it provides us with an opportunity not only to assess the situation in Timor-Leste, but also and especially to consider the role that is being played and should be played by the United Nations in assisting the people and the Government of Timor-Leste.

On the subject of national reconciliation and democracy, the extent of the political differences between the leaders of Timor-Leste regarding the measures necessary to settle critical issues that the country is facing continues to be considerable. Nonetheless, the attitude that has been assumed by the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) following the recent attacks must be recognized as a sign of political and democratic maturity.

We should channel all available energy and resources to take advantage of the moment of political lucidity that has been sparked by the gunshots. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) should promote, with renewed determination, reconciliation and democratic participation.

On the subject of justice, human rights and the rule of law, the sustainability of any political understanding depends to a large extent on the

effective participation of all sectors, including, in the case of Timor-Leste, the so-called petitioners. However, that cannot occur in a situation of impunity, hence the special importance of implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry.

The indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, including the virtues of the rule of law, may become mere empty words when some 40 per cent of the population live in poverty and unemployment and a further 10 per cent have been displaced by the internal violence. That is why the support provided by the international community in general and UNMIT in particular is of such importance. It is not a matter of creating a dependence on the international system; it is a matter of generating national capacity. The Council should reconsider whether the mandate and resources of UNMIT are sufficient to facilitate and promote such capacity-building.

Regarding peacebuilding and development, the absence of Alfredo Reinado could either provide an opportunity or constitute a threat in terms of the peacebuilding process. Taking advantage of the window of opportunity that has been opened by the attacks is the main challenge facing the Timorese authorities and UNMIT. Peace, justice and development, promoted in a parallel — and not successive — manner, are the keys to success.

In that regard, we recall that, a few weeks ago, the Government of Timor-Leste expressed its belief that an UNMIT presence would be needed for a further five years, years that should be devoted in particular to promoting stability and strengthening security, leading up to the deployment of a mission with a peacebuilding mandate for approximately three more years. Costa Rica considers it proper that the Council consider that request, once agreements have been reached regarding the current renewal of the UNMIT mandate. We would like the Council to conduct an analysis of the situation that goes beyond the 12-month period for which the mandate's extension is currently being considered. To that end, the Secretary-General should provide an exhaustive report, including options for a successful exit strategy.

Security sector reform, economic development and democracy-building in Timor-Leste will take place only insofar as sufficient guarantees are provided for stability and security. Therefore, flexible and effective security sector reform should continue to be a priority for the Council. Strengthening the police and institutions that contribute to administrating justice are essential requirements.

The stability that has prevailed in Timor-Leste following the attacks against its democratic institutions and against the life of President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão are clear signs of the progress that has already been achieved in this area and of the effectiveness of the United Nations police, in conjunction with the International Stabilization Force. We are grateful to them, and to Australia in particular. However, with a continuous view to building capacity rather than generating dependence, we would like to emphasize the need to expedite the training process and to hand over full responsibility to the Timor-Leste police.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. President, with some thoughts that I am sure that your country, Panama, will share with me, since our two countries are the two members of this Council that do not have a standing military institution. All too often, the hopes and dreams of many generations of men and women all over the world have been sacrificed on the basis of a misguided concept of national security. Costa Rica wonders whether the huge challenges to be overcome by Timor-Leste on the path to building a dynamic and prosperous democracy will be overcome or reinforced with the proposed security sector reform, which includes a national army as a standing institution.

Since the end of the 1990s, Indonesia has been committed to the concept of a sovereign Timor-Leste, with the support of the entire international community. Costa Rica wonders whether we can truly justify the need for a military focus for the security of Timor-Leste. Are the security challenges faced by the people of Timor-Leste of an internal or external nature? What is the most effective and efficient way of dealing with them? How best can we contribute to peace and stability in the region?

Like Timor-Leste, Costa Rica is a small country, and we have decided that our security will not depend on military strength, which would be small in any case, given our economic limitations. Rather, we chose to focus on building democracy and improving the quality of life of our people and promoting respect for the rule of law and human rights. We feel that that is a wise option that Timor-Leste might consider following, and

we respectfully encourage the Council to consider that alternative.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his substantive briefing on the latest developments in Timor-Leste and for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2008/26). We also listened very carefully to the assessments contained in the statement by the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste.

Against the backdrop of a gradual improvement in the security situation, the attacks against the President and Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, which took place in Dili on 11 February were a dangerous challenge to the legal authority and to the peace process. We firmly condemn those attacks. Those who planned and perpetrated them must be brought to trial.

We would like to wish a speedy recovery to President Ramos-Horta, whom we deeply respect and whose authority is internationally acknowledged.

We are pleased to note that, despite these unprecedented crimes, the country's leadership has demonstrated political responsibility, restraint and professionalism and has been able to keep the situation under control. Great credit for maintaining security and law and order goes to UNMIT and the International Security Forces.

The events of 11 February were a direct outcome of the crisis of May 2006. Promptly eradicating the causes and consequences of this crisis, specifically the problems of the petitioners and the internally displaced persons, would make it possible for Timor-Leste to move towards constructing a democratic society.

We support the core conclusions and recommendations contained the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that the mandate of UNMIT should be extended for one more year. We believe that the efforts of UNMIT should be aimed above all at training a robust and professional national police force, which would then be able gradually to take on primary responsibility for independently maintaining law and order in that country.

International support to Timor-Leste is also needed to help strengthen State institutions, the legal system and economic and social development. In the current situation, it is particularly important to advance the process of national reconciliation in Timor-Leste and to promote dialogue and cooperation among all political forces in the country. The Russian Federation will continue to support the people and the Government of Timor-Leste in their efforts to build a stable and democratic society in their young State.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26) and Ambassador Santos for giving us so concisely his country's crucial perspective on recent events and on the future.

I would like to begin by associating my delegation with the statement to be delivered later in our debate by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to join colleagues in condemning the attacks on President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão of 11 February. As the Council has made clear, there can be no justification for acts such as those. We expect that the law enforcement authorities will be able to bring those responsible to justice and that stability will thus be maintained in East Timor.

We are encouraged by the Secretariat's assessment that the Timorese State institutions and the opposition have met the challenge posed by those attacks and have responded, as Mr. Guéhenno stated, in keeping with their constitutional and human rights obligations. We commend the people of East Timor for remaining calm and steadfast in such difficult times for their young democracy, and we thank the International Stabilization Force, and particularly the Australian leadership of that force, for coming so swiftly to the assistance of the legitimate Government of East Timor and for reinforcing its presence on the ground to help bolster the security situation. My Government joins others in wishing Mr. Ramos-Horta a full and swift recovery. We are encouraged by what the Ambassador and the Under-Secretary-General said this morning in that regard.

As others have said, these attacks underline the fact that the security situation and the wider situation in East Timor remain fragile, volatile and vulnerable to setbacks. So it is for the people of the country to do everything in their power to ensure the sustained positive trend in terms of politics, security and

sustainable economic and social development. For my Government, that means three things.

First, efforts should continue building a shared vision by the Timorese Government and the opposition, and the civil society more generally, of what kind of country Timor-Leste should be, including by building on the multiparty discussions referred to by the Under-Secretary-General earlier.

Secondly, there needs to be a determined effort by the State institutions, with international support, to build capacity and deliver reform, particularly in the security and justice sectors. We look forward to receiving the findings of the expert mission to be dispatched by the Secretary-General with the aim of carrying out a thorough assessment, in particular in the field of policing.

Thirdly, a commitment by the Timorese Government is needed to the full implementation of the 2008 budget now agreed by the parliament of Timor-Leste.

This Council of the United Nations and the wider international community are committed to help. We heard in this Chamber over the past year, and again this morning, a consistent message from the representatives of Timor-Leste that the Security Council should continue to provide them with support, including through the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), over the years ahead.

We are very sympathetic to this message, and it is for this reason that we support the extension of the UNMIT mandate by 12 months. We think that Special Representative Khare and his team continue to do an excellent job delivering on their mandate, and we welcome and commend South Africa's leadership of this issue in the Council.

At the same time, we also remain mindful of an underlying principle, which is a point that Ambassador Santos also made this morning. That is, the goal of the international community should be to help the people of Timor-Leste stand on their own feet. We therefore think we need a forward-looking and proactive approach that seeks to move beyond stabilization and into sustainable, national-led peacebuilding as soon as we responsibly can.

We therefore hope that in future reports, the Secretary-General and his team will be able to develop a medium-term strategy, with appropriate benchmarks aimed at achieving this end state, and that, of course, in close and continuous consultation with the Government of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): At the outset, I wish to warmly thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing. The reasons that keep the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Timorese leaders away from New York are well understood.

Nevertheless, I would like to convey, through the Under-Secretary-General, our full support to the Special Representative for his efforts and to Ambassador Santos, whom I also thank for his intervention. We also convey our most sincere wishes to President Ramos-Horta for a quick and full recovery and a swift resumption of his functions.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

The attacks of 11 February in Dili, which we have strongly condemned, must serve as a warning and as a lesson. The warning is not to take for granted, after the successful completion of the electoral cycle, that the democratic progress of the country has reached the point of no return and will face no further obstacles. The lesson is to carefully consider the requests of the Timorese authorities for a sustained commitment by the United Nations in the current configuration.

Many of the findings of the Security Council mission and of the report of the Secretary-General have been substantiated by the unfolding of the latest events. I refer here to the need to address the root causes of the 2006 crisis, to the importance of a cooperative and substantive political dialogue among all political stakeholders and to the urgency of a thorough review of the security sector arrangements, all with the required assistance of the international community. These must remain the main focus areas for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which is operating effectively and deserves our strongest support. The complementary action of the international security forces is also to be commended.

We strongly hope that the latest developments will instil a new sense of urgency in the processes of political reconciliation and State-building. We learned that in the aftermath of the 11 February attacks the

reactions of the legitimate institutions, and of the opposition, were exemplary. We also welcome the readiness of the Government of Timor-Leste to accept the additional assistance that the international community, and its neighbours in particular, have immediately offered at this crucial stage.

At the same time, we must bear in mind that national ownership and participation in regional processes remain the only long-term recipes for sustainability. No form of international support can replace the genuine will of the Timorese leaders and people to pursue stability and development, in close cooperation with their neighbours. Obviously, this consideration does not preclude the need for sustained international assistance in the foreseeable future, in a spirit of interdependence, rather than one of dependence, with the ultimate goal being full self-reliance.

For its part, Italy, along with its European Union partners, has constantly supported the young Timorese democracy at all stages of its genesis and development. During the recent visit to Rome of President Ramos-Horta, additional projects were considered with the Italian authorities in the areas of parliamentary support, human resources development and cultural and linguistic cooperation.

In this spirit of friendship, Italy is also ready to support the extension for 12 months of the mandate of UNMIT. I would like to praise UNMIT, in particular for providing a bright example in terms of gender mainstreaming in its activities and reporting.

Finally, I would like to highlight once again that the failure to address impunity for past crimes is the worst enemy of peace and stabilization, as shown by the latest events. It is therefore imperative to ensure justice and accountability for the events of 1999 and 2006, as provided for in relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, Ambassador Santos, for his statement.

China strongly condemns the recent attacks by the rebels on President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão of Timor-Leste. We wish President Ramos-Horta a speedy recovery. We also hope that the Timorese people will keep calm, exercise restraint and do all they can to maintain stability in the country.

Over the past few months, the United Nations has closely followed the situation in Timor-Leste. The Security Council mission and the Secretary-General visited Timor-Leste. The Security Council has also held many in-depth discussions on the situation in that country. Following the attacks, the Security Council immediately issued a presidential statement. All of this fully demonstrates the support of the international community to the process of peacebuilding and reconstruction in Timor-Leste.

During last December's open debate (see S/PV.5801), China stated its position on the situation in Timor-Leste in a comprehensive manner. Here, I wish to emphasize the following points.

First, the leaders of the various Timorese factions should achieve reconciliation through dialogue and address the security problem. The recent attacks have shown that the security situation in the country remains fragile. Apart from the problem of the Military Police Commander, Reinado, the problems of the internally displaced persons and the petitioners pose a threat to the peace and stability in Timor-Leste.

Effectively coping with the security problem, especially in these trying times, requires that the Government, with all its factions, especially FRETILIN, should put behind their past grievances and cooperate fully with each other. China appreciates the fact that, following the attacks, FRETILIN swiftly issued a statement condemning them and calling on the Timorese people to remain calm. We hope that the various Timorese factions will put national stability and the people's interests first and, through dialogue and exchanges of view, increase their mutual trust, overcome their differences, help their people to view the common situation rationally, and seek to address all differences peacefully. The United Nations should continue to play a constructive role in promoting the reconciliation process in the country.

Secondly, maintaining peace and stability in Timor-Leste also requires the joint efforts of the armed forces, the police, the international security forces and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). China appreciates the efforts of the international security forces and UNMIT to maintain security in Timor-Leste, but the recent attacks have sounded an alarm for the international community. We

have seen that gaps remain in the security and protection work being done in Timor-Leste.

China supports the Security Council's extension of UNMIT's mandate. In the next phase, the security forces of Timor-Leste, the international security forces and UNMIT should remain highly vigilant and, while maintaining public security, also strengthen protection for the country's prominent figures. At the same time, those three forces should also keep communications open between them and cooperate with each other so as to optimize their respective advantages.

Thirdly, the long-term stability of Timor-Leste requires the implementation of the Government's working plan and a significant contribution to the development of the country's economy. The Government of Timor-Leste has already formulated this year's budget, as well as a work plan. We hope to see their gradual implementation and, through economic development, the continued improvement of the livelihoods of the people and a reduction in poverty, especially through increased job opportunities, particularly among young people, so as to eliminate the root causes of social instability. In improving the people's livelihoods and standards of living, attention must be paid to promoting development in the various social sectors and to fostering and increasing the people's self-confidence. The international community should provide every possible assistance in support of the efforts of the Timorese Government.

Fourthly, we should take the future tasks and composition of UNMIT into consideration in an integrated manner. As a large portion of the Timorese police are still in the identification, verification and reappointment phase, the peacekeeping personnel of the United Nations remain on the front line of enforcement in some areas. It is clear both from the Security Council's mission and from the Secretary-General's report that certain Government officials and other people remain concerned in that regard.

It is imperative for a variety of reasons gradually to transfer policing responsibilities to the national police of Timor-Leste. While continuing to undertake its policing responsibilities and tasks to ensure public security in Timor-Leste, the United Nations should also help the national police to strengthen its policing capabilities. The United Nations police may wish as a next step to consider refocusing its work on training and sharing its experience with the national police. Following a comprehensive consideration of the rational allocation of United Nations peacekeeping resources, the composition of UNMIT may also be adjusted accordingly.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific family, China has closely followed the situation in Timor-Leste and sincerely hopes that, with the full assistance of the international community, Timor-Leste will maintain its peace and stability and start down the road to development and national prosperity. China will, to the extent possible, maintain its assistance to Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Guéhenno for his detailed briefing on the latest developments in Timor-Leste. I also commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and thank him for the information provided in his report.

I also thank Mr. Santos, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations, for his statement, as well as our South African colleague for the critical role his country has played and for its efforts to draw up a draft resolution on extending the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

The report of the Secretary-General refers to progress made in terms of security in Timor-Leste, although the situation remains tenuous, as evidenced by the attacks on the President and the Prime Minister. The attacks sought to harm its immediate victims and the country as a whole, which had only just begun to restore calm and stability following last year's elections. Libya therefore reiterates its firm condemnation of the attacks on the President and Prime Minister of Timor-Leste. We pray to God for President Ramos-Horta's speedy recovery.

My country shares the Secretary-General's view that the national police force of Timor-Leste requires further support in training and capacity-development if it is to fully shoulder its responsibilities for restoring order, which is under ongoing threat. The Timorese authorities need to develop a comprehensive approach to reforming the security sector in cooperation with UNMIT. That issue is of the highest priority and requires their full attention. We hope that the measures recently taken by the Government in that area, to which Mr. Guéhenno referred, will strengthen security and mark a positive step in that direction.

The Parliament and Government of Timor-Leste worked to ensure the success of last year's elections and the establishment of democratic institutions. While duty-bound to commend those efforts, we remain concerned about the remaining differences because there has been no cooperation between the heads of the political parties, preventing the establishment of an agreed approach to such pending matters as the issue of internally displaced persons and the petitioners of the Timorese armed forces, among others. We therefore call on all Timorese parties to find common ground for launching a dialogue and reconciling so as to overcome the aforementioned differences. I would also like to welcome Mr. Guéhenno's observation that the reaction of all parties and political groups to those deplorable attacks was in full respect for State institutions and for the constitution.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26) referred to several issues that must be addressed: poverty, continuing unemployment and socio-economic problems. There is also a need to improve coordination among security institutions, strengthen the legal framework and operational capacities and exert full control over all forces on the ground. We therefore call on the United Nations and UNMIT to cooperate with local authorities in order to achieve those goals.

We very much appreciate the observations contained in the Secretary-General's report. We, of course, agree with him that efforts must be intensified in order to bolster dialogue, restore calm, ease tensions, bring about national reconciliation, strengthen national institutions and achieve national reconciliation. We also endorse his recommendation that UNMIT's mandate be extended for a further 12 months.

Last but not least, we commend the efforts of Mr. Atul Khare and UNMIT to build up Timor-Leste's national political, economic and security institutions.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): We too would like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for the very thorough and enlightening briefing he has given us on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2008/26). We also thank our friend the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste for his enlightening and very informative statement.

The history of the people of Timor-Leste, their struggle for independence and their current admirable efforts to fully regain their sovereignty are an example to us all. They deserve the unwavering support of the international community in helping the country to build its institutions and advance its development. Any obstacle or attempt intended to jeopardize that desire to assume responsibility cannot be tolerated. It is for that reason that the recent attacks against President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão prompted unanimous international indignation and condemnation. In that connection, we cannot fail to commend the action taken by the Government of Australia, which promptly came to the assistance of the legitimate Government of Timor-Leste.

We welcome the notable progress made by Timor-Leste and its firm commitment to building a democratic future, as illustrated by the very successful holding of the recent presidential and legislative elections. That clearly demonstrates a spirit of tolerance, understanding and reconciliation. We hope that that spirit will prevail throughout the entire country in order to promote genuine national reconciliation, including as regards the issue of the petitioners.

We also welcome the Government's drafting and the Parliament's adoption of a development programme as part of the 2008 budget. That will make it possible to address the crucial challenges of security and the situation of internally displaced persons. There are other equally important issues on the agenda, such as the building of a strong national economy, national reconciliation and strengthening security and the rule of law. Nevertheless, one of the main challenges that the Government must urgently address is, in our view and as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, that of combating unemployment, which undermines the future of young people and which can also lead to migration from the countryside. Without jobs and real prospects for the future, there is a significant risk that young people will face dangers and difficulties in life. Those dangers must be avoided, as they could lead to demands and troubles of all sorts. Whatever the difficulties, priority should be accorded to that issue.

Burkina Faso welcomes the Government's signing of an agreement aimed at coordinating national resources and international assistance to promote the country's development. Timor-Leste's donors and partners, especially the countries of the region, should therefore firmly support the Government's programme in order that it can be fully implemented. It is also

important to ensure that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has the same support.

Governance is a crucial issue for an emerging democracy such as Timor-Leste. We have every confidence that UNMIT and the United Nations system can support and strengthen the republic's institutions, leading to the establishment of genuine democracy based on the rule of law. The risk of instability and the fragility of the political process, which are still real, justify the continued presence of UNMIT to maintain public order and provide support for the justice sector. However, my delegation recognizes that restructuring and appropriate training of the Timorese national police — which must also be depoliticized so that it can assume full — is more necessary than ever. We therefore welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General to assess the needs of the national police, with a view to a gradual transfer of competencies. It goes without saying that Burkina Faso supports the renewal of UNMIT's mandate.

Lastly, we would like to thank Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo for the role his country has played in the core group on Timor-Leste.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I too would like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste, which the Security Council has followed with particular attention since the attacks against President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão 10 days ago. I would also like to thank Ambassador Nelson Santos, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, for his statement.

We were very shocked to learn about the terrorist attacks against the head of State and the Prime Minister, which were aimed at destabilizing the country and undermining the Government's recovery efforts. France once again condemns those attacks against the legitimate and democratically elected authorities of Timor-Leste. At the same time, we commend the constructive response to those developments by Timorese political officials, both in the majority and the opposition. In contrast to what occurred in the spring of 2006, Timorese institutions have continued to function in an environment of legality and cooperation, regularly including the opposition.

My delegation also welcomes the very positive role played by neighbouring countries, especially Indonesia and Australia, whose speedy response provided support to the Timorese authorities and crucially helped to maintain stability in that country. As has been mentioned here, that support included vital medical assistance for President Ramos-Horta. We welcome the encouraging signs regarding developments in his medical condition. France hopes for his speedy and complete recovery.

The events of 11 February serve once again to remind us of the importance of combating impunity for past crimes, both those of 1999 and those of the spring of 2006, as a condition for lasting reconciliation. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for the efforts of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) to assist the Prosecutor-General of Timor-Leste. Those efforts are fully in line with the mandate given to the mission by the Security Council.

Finally, we believe that in the current circumstances, it is more necessary than ever before to maintain an international security presence in Timor-Leste. The reassuring presence of UNMIT and of the international security forces is an essential element for stability in the country and for the strengthening of its institutions. In that regard, my delegation would like to express once again its appreciation for the work carried out by Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste. I should also like to join preceding speakers in commending Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa for his efforts on Timor-Leste in the Security Council.

Thus, France supports a 12-month extension of UNMIT's mandate. The mandate should be part of a medium-term consolidation strategy formulated by the Secretary-General with a view to gradual Timorese ownership of tasks currently being performed by UNMIT. In that context, my country will continue to support the international community's efforts to achieve development and stability in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. We also thank His Excellency Ambassador Nelson Santos, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, for his informative statement on the situation in his country.

We had hoped to hear directly today from Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão via video link, but in the end

that was not possible. We register our disappointment that we could not do so. But we are very grateful that Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, has given us a comprehensive presentation on the latest events in Timor-Leste and, in particular, on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26).

My delegation is also very appreciative of the dedicated efforts of the men and women of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the entire United Nations team in support of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste, under the leadership of Mr. Atul Khare.

I also want to thank you, Mr. President, for accepting the request of the core group countries that have been supporting Timor-Leste outside the Council to come and join in the debate on this issue today. I think the fact that we have seen representatives of countries outside the Council come here to present their views to us on the situation in Timor-Leste, as they will do later, is an indication that the future of Timor-Leste matters not only to us, but also to the United Nations community as a whole. We thank you for having opened the door for others to participate here.

Like other delegations, we were shocked to learn recently that President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão were attacked on 11 February. We wish President Ramos-Horta a full recovery so that he can continue to lead his country on its path to consolidate democracy and stability. South Africa would like to reiterate its condemnation of those attacks in the strongest possible terms. We further applaud the Security Council for its swift response to that heinous act, not only by convening emergency consultations, but also by adopting a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/5), which sent the word out that the Council is watching the events in Timor-Leste.

We also wish to commend Timor-Leste's neighbouring countries. Timor-Leste has been blessed with neighbours that have been there to assist, especially in its greatest time of need. Those countries include Australia and New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and others, which reacted when these events happened. We particularly wish to thank Australia, which immediately released security forces that went to assist Timor-Leste in its great hour of need. We also wish in particular to recall the very strong political statement by the Government of Indonesia, which also sent out the message that the attack on the democratic institutions of Timor-Leste would not be acceptable at all.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste is a source of both hope and challenge. On the one hand, it describes a series of significant strides achieved, including the successful holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, the formation of a democratic Government and the general improvement of the security situation in Timor-Leste. On the other hand, the report also highlights, as it should, some of the key political, security and socio-economic challenges facing Timor-Leste, including the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the lack of capacity in key Government institutions.

In paragraph 3 of his report, the Secretary-General correctly notes:

> "The performance of the Parliament, Government and other State institutions in Timor-Leste reflected progress in policymaking and active political debate within democratically sanctioned arenas".

Despite the persisting differences among political leaders and parties in Timor-Leste, we are confident that they will overcome their differences, work together to address priority needs and cooperate on the need to move their country forward.

As Mr. Guéhenno reported, the ongoing dialogue among the leaders of various political parties in Timor-Leste, under the leadership of President Ramos-Horta, is a great step indeed for the future of Timor-Leste. We reaffirm our support for the continued efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to promote dialogue and reconciliation among parties in Timor-Leste through inclusive and collaborative processes. We hope that the meetings of the High-level Coordination Committee and the Trilateral Coordination Forum will produce much-needed dialogue and progress on the key priorities of the country.

As we have stated before, the problems of Timor-Leste — particularly those related to IDPs or the so-called petitioners — cannot be solved by only one party; they can be addressed successfully only by all Timorese, working together collectively.

My delegation welcomes the improvement in the overall security situation in Timor-Leste, owing to the

collective efforts of the national police force of Timor-Leste, UNMIT and other stakeholders. Notwithstanding that progress, the South African delegation believes that reform of the security sector remains urgent and indispensable. Security sector reform should be owned and led by the Government of Timor-Leste and should be supported by the international community.

In that regard, the task of rebuilding the national police force of Timor-Leste remains crucial and is in the interest of achieving long-term stability in the country. My delegation welcomes the considerable progress achieved in the screening and mentoring process for the national police. South Africa welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to send an expert mission to UNMIT in the first quarter of 2008 to conduct a thorough assessment of the requirements of the national police, as well as possible adjustments to UNMIT in order to improve police skills.

In paragraph 61 of his report, the Secretary-General correctly stresses: "With the manifold challenges ahead, this is a critical moment for the United Nations to reaffirm its continued commitment to Timor-Leste". We, too, believe that the continued presence of the United Nations in Timor-Leste is essential to address the multifaceted challenges facing the country, including political, institutional and security aspects.

We wish to thank the Council for having agreed to extend the mandate of UNMIT for a period of 12 months in order to work in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste to strengthen stability, promote democratic governance and political dialogue and foster national and social cohesion. UNMIT's commitment to Timor-Leste was illustrated in the successful organization and conclusion of presidential and parliamentary elections in the country. Now the hard work remains: the country has to rebuild and strengthen its own democracy.

Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to focus UNMIT's supportive role on other post-electoral priority areas, including the strengthening of capacities in the judicial system, support for strengthening security institutions and support for dialogue and reconciliation. Equally important, bilateral and international support would prove invaluable in capacity-building and in the strengthening of various sectors of the State.

In view of the factors I have just mentioned and the continued need for Timor-Leste to count on the support of the international community, in particular the United Nations system, at this critical stage of its nation-building process, South Africa strongly supports the Secretary-General's proposal. We again wish to thank the Council for having accepted that the mandate of UNMIT should be extended for a further 12 months at the present composition and strength. We also call upon the broader international community to stay the course in Timor-Leste.

In conclusion, we encourage the Government, the political parties and the people of Timor-Leste to utilize the support and presence of UNMIT. As I have reminded the people of Timor-Leste, UNMIT's stay is not endless. So they must use it to the best of their ability now. I am glad that the Council has made it available to them for the next 12 months. We hope that UNMIT can be there to strengthen democracy and to help the people of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to express my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and to our colleague the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste for their clear briefings.

I would also like to state that my delegation fully endorses the statement that will be made shortly by my Slovenian colleague on behalf of the European Union.

With an eye to the effectiveness of our work, I will read only part of the text of my statement; copies of the full text have been distributed.

At this difficult time for Timor-Leste, my delegation would like to express its full support to it in restoring stability. We would also like to pay tribute to President José Ramos-Horta, who has sought by all means to bring about a negotiated solution. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Belgium welcomes the fact that, despite this attack against men who embody the democratically elected institutions, the Timorese institutions have continued to operate and provide continuity. In the past, we have repeatedly underscored how important it is that the parties present a united front against the challenges the country is facing. The position of the parliament and of the opposition is, in this context, to be welcomed. We welcome the 14 February joint statement by the heads of all of the political parties, in

which they condemned together the attacks of 11 February and agreed that the perpetrators must be arrested and tried.

Last week's attacks are a tragic illustration of how essential it is that the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry on the events of 2006 be effectively implemented. Impunity is not a solution. It is most praiseworthy that the Timor-Leste authorities sought to achieve the surrender of Alfredo Reinado and of his group. Unfortunately, the path of negotiations failed. Everything must be done to bring about the arrest and trial of those responsible for crimes of the past. The fight against impunity is a prerequisite for bringing about reconciliation and sustainable peace. With respect to last week's attacks also, justice must follow its course.

Other consequences of the 2006 crisis persist; they call for resolute action from the Government and for the full support of the international community. The plight of the petitioners was on the verge of being resolved. We fully encourage the Government of Timor-Leste to continue the negotiations that had begun.

Another of those consequences is the high number of displaced persons; they represent more than 10 per cent of the population of the country. Beyond the material considerations, their return to their home villages is closely tied to a sense of security and justice with respect to the 2006 crisis.

But we should not focus solely on the consequences of the 2006 crisis. To avoid any further risk, the causes of the crisis must also be resolved. One of those causes, as we know, lies in the weakness of the institutions, in particular the security sector.

In this framework, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) needs to continue with training and monitoring the national police, while continuing to maintain law and order. We welcome the fact that the transfer of responsibilities in this area from UNMIT to the national police has already begun in a number of neighbourhoods in Dili. Furthermore, we encourage the Government to make full use of UNMIT's expertise with respect to comprehensive security sector review.

The diversity and multiplicity of the challenges that the country faces call for renewed commitment by the United Nations. Here, Belgium fully supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate for a period of 12 months. We have every confidence that this renewed presence will be able — and here I quote the Secretary-General and paraphrase our colleague from Timor-Leste — "to support Timorese-owned solutions" (S/2008/26, para. 61).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Panama.

I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing. My thanks go also to the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), represented by Mr. Atul Khare, for its efforts, and to South Africa for its interest, reflected in a variety of actions. The concern and endeavours of Australia, Indonesia and other countries of the region during these difficult times for Timor-Leste are also to be acknowledged.

Today, we recognize the progress made by Timor-Leste and UNMIT in 2007. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26) highlights, among other things, the holding of elections, the security sector reform and the building of democratic institutions. We could list other areas of progress.

However, despite the calm that has prevailed in Timor-Leste following the recent attacks against two high representatives of the legitimate institutions, the attacks show that a long road remains to be travelled to address and remedy the causes of the conflict. We note, furthermore, that in recent years the members of the Council have acknowledged the wide range of activities required to achieve these ends, many of which do not fall within the traditional concept of peacekeeping. This is a good time to recognize that fact. The Charter of the United Nations lays down, as one the Organization's purposes, the maintenance of international peace and security and grants to the Security Council the prime responsibility for that function. At the time, the immediate concern of the authors of the Charter was disputes between States. In the post-war world that goal of maintaining peace meant peace between States.

However, a constitutive charter — and the United Nations Charter is one — should develop in keeping with the needs of the times, or it ceases to be a living document and may well become a dead letter. The Charter should, moreover, be interpreted as a whole. Its

principles include protection of human rights and promotion of development. The concepts of peace and security should therefore be interpreted as something more than just the absence of war or armed conflict.

The experience of Timor-Leste is an example of the importance of this conceptual evolution as regards peacekeeping. UNMIT is not the first time that the United Nations has sought to tackle problems in that region. Today, more than ever, it is clear that the priorities of UNMIT's future mandate should include not just the maintenance of peace and security but also should attend to political, institutional, humanitarian, human rights and sustainability aspects, because without them, peace and security will remain elusive. Consolidating dialogue and reconciliation, deepening reform of the justice and security sectors, resolving the problem of internally displaced persons and promoting economic development are among the various factors that must be dealt with.

In that context, allow me to support and echo the statements of Ambassador Urbina of Costa Rica on the need to build capacity and not dependence. He warned in particular about the need to strengthen the armed forces in Timor-Leste as a matter requiring very careful consideration. The experience of Panama and Costa Rica runs counter to such a trend.

Lastly, allow me to repeat that this Council should demonstrate its commitment to Timor-Leste through efforts to deal with problems and projects in a cross-cutting manner. In the various areas of its mandate it should be both flexible and robust and should present clear goals, sufficient to allow the Secretariat, as our executive body, to draft clear, verifiable and immediate goals and eventually to prepare procedures for an orderly and successful withdrawal.

I cannot end without expressing our recognition of the irreplaceable leadership work carried out by President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão and expressing our hopes for a speedy recovery to President Ramos-Horta.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate once again in the Security Council's deliberations on Timor-Leste. We thank the Council for its ongoing support for that country. Today I wish to particularly mention the lead role being played by South Africa, by Ambassador Kumalo especially.

On behalf of my country, I want to again thank the staff of and contributors to the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in the field and Special Representative Khare and Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and his team here at the head office for the leadership they provide. I also want to express my appreciation for the statement today by my friend Ambassador Nelson Santos, on behalf of Timor-Leste.

Australia deplores the shocking attacks on President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão on 11 February. The actions of the perpetrators represent a terrible attack on the democratically elected leadership of one of Australia's nearest neighbours and underscore the continued fragility of the security situation in Timor-Leste. Our thoughts and hopes are with President Ramos-Horta for his ongoing recovery and return to good health.

At the same time, Australia congratulates the Government of Timor-Leste for its careful and measured approach to the events of 11 February, which helped to ensure that the situation remained calm in the immediate aftermath. We call upon the people of Timor-Leste to continue to embrace peace in these difficult times.

As the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable Kevin Rudd MP, has made clear, Australia is a steadfast friend and neighbour of Timor-Leste and will continue to be at the forefront of international efforts to assist it to become a stable and more prosperous nation. During a visit to Dili on 15 February, the Prime Minister made clear Australia's commitment to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Timor-Leste and to contribute enhanced assistance to help provide security and much-needed longer-term development.

We are supporting Timor-Leste's security directly through our leadership of the international security forces, as well as our contribution of police to the United Nations police. In meeting that security responsibility, I want to acknowledge the cooperation we received from UNMIT and other international partners. I also want in particular to express our

appreciation to New Zealand for its continuing contribution to the international security forces.

As was stated earlier, at the request of the Timor-Leste Government, Australia is providing additional Australian military and police assistance to support Timor-Leste in response to the events of 11 February. Australia is also discussing with Timor-Leste a long-term bilateral approach to strengthening Timor-Leste's own security institutions, and we look forward to liaising closely with the United Nations and other donors in that regard.

As recognized by Ambassador Santos today, the Government and people of Timor-Leste must take the primary responsibility for the development of a stable and more prosperous nation, including through political and economic reform, development of the private sector and provision of health services, education and housing. Australia acknowledges the continuing commitment of Timor-Leste's leaders to addressing those challenges, which Prime Minister Gusmão has been quick to reaffirm in the wake of the events of 11 February. Political reconciliation and support for democratic processes by all political leaders and others in Timor-Leste will be fundamental to a secure and prosperous future. That is a challenge we hope UNMIT can continue to address, although ultimately it is a responsibility for the leaders and people of Timor-Leste. Australia recognizes the important contribution made by UNMIT to supporting democratic reform and political consolidation in Timor-Leste.

The events of 11 February emphasize how important it is for Timor-Leste to continue to work to strengthen its justice system as a basis for long-term stability. Any perceptions of impunity for those who commit crimes threaten to undermine the Timorese people's confidence in their justice system. Australia welcomes the efforts of the United Nations and other donors to strengthen Timor-Leste's justice system and supports the Secretary-General's recommendation for continued endeavours in that vital area.

Tackling the challenges of underdevelopment will be central to stabilizing Timor-Leste's political and security environment. During his visit to Dili on 15 February, the Australian Prime Minister foreshadowed that Australia was looking to provide additional support to help Timor-Leste tackle high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth.

Finally, as a key donor to Timor-Leste and mindful of the broad and complex range of development cooperation taking place, Australia looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste and closely with other donors to ensure a carefully coordinated approach.

It is especially important that the international community, led by the United Nations, continues to support Timor-Leste at this time. Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on UNMIT, which recommends a 12-month mandate extension with a continuation of current police levels. A 12-month extension of UNMIT's mandate will provide valuable continuity, certainty and security for Timor-Leste. Importantly, the next 12 months will provide a valuable opportunity for Timor-Leste to implement its hard decisions on the road to reform while it has the support of UNMIT and the international community.

This will be a critical year for the Government of Timor-Leste to move ahead to address the challenges and advance the political, social and economic reforms to which it is committed. Australia is committed to continuing its strong support for Timor-Leste during this difficult but important transition.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): The Philippine delegation commends you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting to deliberate on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/26) concerning developments in Timor-Leste and on the recommendations contained therein. We congratulate Panama on a successful presidency of the Council. My delegation also wishes to thank the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste for his profound statement and Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his clear presentation of the report of the Secretary-General.

The Philippines joins other Member States in condemning in the strongest possible terms the attacks on the President and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste on 11 February 2008. Designed to destabilize the country, the attacks were inimical to the interests of Timor-Leste and its people and affected the gains that have been achieved thus far in Timor-Leste's journey towards democracy along the path of justice, freedom, progress and stability. We are relieved that, despite this serious threat, Timor-Leste has remained calm and that

the dastardly act did not achieve its desired objective. We commend the efforts of the Government of Timor-Leste, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the International Security Forces in preserving and maintaining peace and order in the country.

This unfortunate incident also underscores the need for continued engagement by the international community, particularly by the United Nations, in promoting peace, order and stability in Timor-Leste. UNMIT has been performing very well in the execution of its mandate; it should not be made to cease carrying out its mandate. It must be pointed out that all Timorese interlocutors conveyed both to the Security Council mission that visited Timor-Leste last year and to the Secretary-General their desire for UNMIT to remain in the country. Complacency and a false sense of security must not be allowed to diminish the need for UNMIT. The gains earlier achieved under United Nations auspices could have been maintained if the mission had not been prematurely drawn down a few years ago. The continuation of UNMIT is necessary to preserve the gains as well as to support Timor-Leste in addressing the challenges that lie ahead. Thus, the Philippines supports the extension of the mandate of UNMIT for at least 12 months at the current authorized levels. This 12-month extended mandate will provide continuity and stability for the mission and will remove the anxieties to which the people of Timor-Leste are exposed every time a mandate is reviewed for a short period of time. Moreover, the 12-month extension would also provide troop contributors with adequate and sufficient time to plan ahead in their deployments.

The Philippines will continue to support Timor-Leste's nation-building efforts. It will endeavour to improve Philippine troop contributions to UNMIT, quantitatively and qualitatively, as the situation of the Philippines allows. As mentioned before, the Philippines has participated in all United Nations missions in Timor-Leste from the beginning. The Philippines is currently the largest contributor of individual police officers to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and most of those individual police officers are in the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, which is the largest police-led peacekeeping operation the Philippines currently takes part in.

Aside from peacekeeping, the Philippines is also working with other donors in the area of capacity-building, particularly in human resources development. The Philippines remains ready to explore other areas of assistance in order to strengthen Timor-Leste's capacities and institutions. We urge the international community to do likewise.

As we proceed to contemplate the next phase of Timor-Leste's nation-building efforts, the Philippines wishes to highlight the following points raised in the Secretary-General's report.

First, the Philippines fully recognizes that the security sector is crucial for the long-term stability of the country. The events of April and May 2006 and of this month attest to the need to address problems in this area. In view of this, the Philippines supports the continuation of work to comprehensively review the future role and needs of the security sector within the framework of the three-tier coordination structure established in August 2007, which is jointly led by the President, the parliament and the Prime Minister. The Philippines also supports UNMIT efforts to strengthen the Timor-Leste police.

Secondly, the Philippines acknowledges that socio-economic concerns, particularly poverty and unemployment, continue to be major causes of instability in Timor-Leste. It therefore welcomes the commitment of the Government of Timor-Leste to address these concerns, as indicated in its 2008 budget. It hopes that United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and international financial institutions will work closely with the Government of Timor-Leste in supporting the implementation of that budget.

Thirdly, the Philippines continues to encourage dialogue among the political leaders to achieve national reconciliation and political stability. It is only through the fostering of political consensus that differences are resolved without violence and that cooperation is engendered.

Fourthly, the Philippines strongly stresses the importance of Timor-Leste's ownership of the whole process. The international community should take the views, aspirations and sentiments of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste into consideration in any decision to be taken about their country. The visits of the Security Council mission in November and of the Secretary-General in December are commendable

components of the consultation process. Visits of that nature should be encouraged.

In conclusion, the Philippines continues to assert and maintain that Timor-Leste is still one of the best examples of a successful enterprise made possible through the combined cooperative efforts of the United Nations, regional players and other partners. This success must be nurtured and preserved through the continuing vigilance and support of the international community.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call now on the representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine, align themselves with this declaration.

First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. I would like also to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing as well for his frank assessment of the situation. The European Union highly appreciates the valuable work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and in particular that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Mr. Atul Khare. I wish further to thank the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste for his statement today.

The European Union is following the situation in Timor-Leste with deep concern. The EU firmly condemns the assassination attempt on Timor-Leste's President, José Ramos-Horta, and the attack on the convoy of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão. Those actions only strengthen the EU's firm determination to support Timor-Leste's democratically elected leaders, its institutions and its sustainable development in order to protect its future.

There can be no doubt that the perpetrators of the attacks of 11 February aimed at the core of the legitimate institutions of Timor-Leste and sought to create a highly volatile security situation that would endanger the achievements that Timor-Leste has made since its independence. It is encouraging and therefore a sign of progress in Timor-Leste's post-conflict transition that the Government, the parliament and major political parties, including the opposition leadership, responded appropriately to that crisis and fulfilled their constitutional obligations. It is vital that Government and opposition stay in close dialogue and that all Timorese set aside any differences and work together to address the challenges the country faces and to create a stable and prosperous future for all the people of Timor-Leste.

The situation further underlines the importance of the continued supporting role performed by UNMIT, and the United Nations police contingent in particular. The EU also commends the efforts of The International Stabilisation Force, including its swift action to provide emergency treatment to President Ramos-Horta.

As the report of the Secretary-General underlines, some progress has been observed in terms of a functioning parliament and other State institutions, but many critical challenges remain, as a number of the root causes of the May 2006 crisis have not been fully addressed. Those include political divisions; weak institutions, particularly the security forces; widespread poverty and unemployment, which is especially high among the youth; and the key issue of internally displaced persons.

In his report the Secretary-General mentions positively the role the international community has played in supporting Timor-Leste. For its part, the European Union is determined to continue its active support to Timor-Leste in facing those critical challenges, notably through European Community assistance of over €200 million of ongoing commitments. The imminent upgrade of our presence in Dili through a fully fledged European Community delegation is another sign of the determination of the European Union.

The European Union supports in particular the continued work on a review of the future role and the needs of the security sector and, given the sector's importance for long-term stability, encourages the Government, in close cooperation with UNMIT and the relevant donors, to implement the security sector reform plan.

The EU stresses the importance of ongoing efforts to reach accountability and justice for the events of 1999 and April and May 2006, and calls upon the

Government of Timor-Leste to implement the recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry report.

The European Union fully supports the extension of the UNMIT mandate for a further 12 months, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. Such an extension would help ensure continuity in stabilizing the country further.

While Timor-Leste's transition is continuing on the right path, the situation will remain fragile and volatile if specific challenges are left unaddressed. There are immediate challenges to face: bringing the perpetrators of the 11 February attacks to justice; resolving the petitioners issue; ensuring reconciliation, accountability and justice for the victims of past violence, notably for the events of 1999 and the crisis of 2006; and alleviating the situation faced by internally displaced persons. There are longer-term challenges: for the Timorese leadership to agree on a shared vision of the way ahead; and to build the capacity of Timorese governance institutions, including in budget performance, poverty alleviation and jobs creation.

Ultimately, success in Timor-Leste is for the people of Timor-Leste to achieve. The European Union, along with the United Nations and other international partners, stands ready to assist the Timorese Government and its people in the critical challenges they face in building the capacity of State institutions, in order to further consolidate peace and democracy in Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Timor-Leste, Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing and Ambassador Santos for his statement this morning. I join others in expressing New Zealand's deep concern at the recent attacks in Timor-Leste on the President and the Prime Minister. We wish President Ramos-Horta a quick and full recovery.

We commend the people, Government and parliament of Timor-Leste, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for their initial responses to the attacks. We emphasize the importance of continued close cooperation between the Government, UNMIT and the ISF over security operations, in accordance with established procedures. Thankfully, Timor-Leste's two democratically elected leaders survived the attacks, but the attacks have underscored how fragile Timor-Leste continues to be and how easily recent progress could have been undone.

New Zealand strongly supports the recommendation by the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of UNMIT for a further 12 months. It is important for the United Nations to demonstrate its sustained commitment to Timor-Leste, both for practical reasons and for the reassuring message this will send to the people of Timor-Leste. New Zealand contributes personnel to both UNMIT and the ISF, and we will continue to do so.

New Zealand welcomes the progress that has been made by the Government of Timor-Leste, in particular the successful conduct of national elections. We commend the efforts of UNMIT in assisting Timor-Leste towards those achievements. We recognize, however, as others have today, that a number of serious issues remain unresolved, including the future of the security forces, the internally displaced persons situation, Reinado's supporters and the petitioners. Furthermore, Timor-Leste will need the long-term support of the international community to overcome the challenges of poverty, unemployment and fragile institutions.

New Zealand supports maintaining police numbers at current levels because we recognize that, while there has been improvement in the overall situation, it does remain fragile. The presence of the United Nations police is an important deterrent to a return to violence. UNMIT needs the capacity to fulfil its two primary roles: to provide security, and, at the same time, to support the durable reform and rebuilding of the police force through capacity-building and training. Both roles are equally important to future stability in Timor-Leste. Close attention is needed to the skills sets of United Nations police officers and the way in which those officers' skills are utilized. New Zealand hopes that the upcoming visit by the Police Adviser of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will help in identifying ways to strengthen the United Nations police, including reviewing the process for the handover of police posts to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) to ensure that PNTL is fully ready to assume those responsibilities.

New Zealand continues to believe that security sector reform is essential for ensuring long-term stability in Timor-Leste. UNMIT has a critical supporting role to play. New Zealand strongly encourages UNMIT to step up its efforts to engage with Timor-Leste to find a suitable approach to supporting them in institutionalizing and strengthening Timor-Leste's security forces. A single coherent plan that all stakeholders are committed to would help to ensure a sound and enduring outcome to that process.

There are many other areas in which UNMIT and the international community need to assist Timor-Leste to help the young country stand on its own. Strengthening the justice sector is a high priority. Every effort needs to be made to counter perceptions of impunity. In that regard, it is important that all the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the events of April and May 2006 are fully implemented.

Addressing the multifaceted challenges of underdevelopment and poverty must also be pursued in parallel with those other efforts. New Zealand will continue to assist through its bilateral and multilateral programmes.

New Zealand stands ready as a regional partner and friend of Timor-Leste. We continue to offer our support and encouragement to the leaders and people of Timor-Leste and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Atul Khare, and the UNMIT team. New Zealand remains committed to working with the international community in assisting Timor-Leste. We thank the Security Council for its ongoing support and for the leadership of South Africa in that respect.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): Japan strongly condemns the recent attacks on President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, which sought to obstruct Timor-Leste's nation-building processes through violence. Resorting to violence is unacceptable. We wish President Ramos-Horta a speedy recovery. I also take this opportunity to thank Special Representative Mr. Atul Khare and his team in the field for their dedication in the difficult conditions.

Since the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) last year, Timor-Leste conducted two elections successfully and the parliament completed its first budgetary process through constructive dialogue among all parties. It was gratifying to observe the country recovering from the setback of the 2006 crisis and moving steadily towards democratic governance.

Therefore, that makes it all the more regrettable to witness the unlawful attacks on the democratically elected leaders of the Government. At the same time, it is highly commendable that the Government responded promptly to the emerging situation in an effective manner, in accordance with the constitution, and that the people remained calm and maintained public order. This is clear evidence that the efforts for nation-building have made solid progress.

The report of the Secretary-General points out that there are areas for improvement in order to realize sustainable stability. And, as last Monday's incidents indicate, the situation in Timor-Leste is still fragile. Timor-Leste requires continued support on the part of the international community, and UNMIT plays the primary and indispensable role in this. Therefore, Japan supports a decision by the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNMIT for another 12 months.

Rebuilding a professional national police force is an essential step towards restoring confidence in the Government. We are pleased that UNMIT has successfully completed the screening process for all registered officers. The Government and UNMIT have begun discussing the possibility of a phased transfer of police responsibility to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL).

We commend the readiness of the PNTL to assume more responsibility for the security of their own country. The transfer of responsibility, of course, has to be carried out after careful evaluation of the PNTL's level of capability and of the trust of the people and the community. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to send an expert mission to UNMIT to assess the requirements of the PNTL and possible necessary adjustments to the composition of UNMIT.

Japan is committed to supporting every effort for peacebuilding and development in Timor-Leste. Japan attaches great importance to advancing international efforts to support peacebuilding activities in post-conflict countries. This commitment was reaffirmed in the recent statement by Prime Minister Fukuda and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Koumura. They

both emphasized that Japan must play a responsible role in the international community as a peace-fostering nation, and expressed the hope that Japan will become a focal point for the world to gather knowledge and experience in peacebuilding and to train peacebuilding professionals.

It is for this reason that Japan is extending support for peacebuilding efforts around the world and has launched a pilot programme to train peacebuilding experts in Japan and other Asian countries. Japan will continue to make the utmost efforts in fulfilling its responsibility as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The consolidation of peace entails steady economic recovery and development. Peacebuilding challenges should be tackled in a holistic manner. While we support the extension of the UNMIT mandate, it is essential to always keep in mind the importance of the peacebuilding element in Timor-Leste.

In order for Timor-Leste's recovery to be more successful, the donor base will have to be broadened so that the country can benefit from a wide range of international support. In particular, we should put high priority on creating job opportunities for young people and on promoting the economic activities of the private sector.

Japan has stood by the Government and the people of Timor-Leste and will continue to do so and to demonstrate solidarity and support for the country's efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his very comprehensive assessment and his extremely accurate analysis of the situation in Timor-Leste. I would also like to thank Ambassador Nelson Santos for his presentation and to thank Ambassador Kumalo for his keen interest and helpful leadership on matters related to Timor-Leste.

Portugal concurs with the statement which the representative of Slovenia has just made on behalf of the European Union.

Allow me, first of all, to reiterate our condemnation of the attacks against President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão and to express our best wishes for the prompt recovery of the President of Timor-Leste. The recent events illustrate once again, and in a dramatic way, the vulnerability of Timor-Leste. However, despite these regrettable actions, the situation throughout the country, for the time being, remains quiet.

We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, and all the staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for their tireless and invaluable dedication to the overall security and stability of the country. Effective action should be taken to capture the perpetrators of the 11 February attacks. At the same time, a thorough investigation of the events is urgently required.

In the current circumstances, we encourage the Government, the political parties and the people of Timor-Leste to redouble their efforts to consolidate democratic governance and the rule of law. Political consensus is essential for resolving a number of key issues. The situation of the estimated 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) is one of those issues. We reiterate that it is essential to ensure the return of the IDPs and their resettlement in their original communities. Furthermore, it is important that the situation of the nearly 600 petitioners of the Timor-Leste defence force be resolved in a peaceful manner.

We also believe that justice is a key element for long-lasting national reconciliation. That is the reason why Portugal strongly supports the ongoing efforts to obtain accountability for the events of 1999 and of April and May 2006, along the lines recommended in the report of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry.

Portugal has a consistent standing bilateral commitment towards Timor-Leste and is a leading donor in a large spectrum of areas, including governance, public administration, justice, education and security sector reform. Additionally, we are strongly committed to UNMIT, contributing with a formed police unit from the Portuguese gendarmerie, and we actively support the mandate of UNMIT in all areas.

Since August 2006, UNMIT, in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste, has sought to foster

stability, promote democratic governance, political dialogue and social cohesion. It is in this context that I think it is worth noting that the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2007 were steps in the right direction in the process of consolidating democratic institutions in Timor-Leste.

Rebuilding the National Police of Timor-Leste, in particular continuing the screening and mentoring processes, is an important factor that can contribute to the long-awaited normalization to which the people of Timor-Leste aspire. In the meantime, a continued UNMIT police presence is needed to ensure law enforcement until the National Police is fully reconstituted.

Therefore we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to send an expert mission to UNMIT in the near future in order to conduct a thorough assessment of the capabilities of the National Police and to suggest possible adjustments to the UNMIT police component.

The continued presence of the United Nations in Timor-Leste is essential in helping to address the challenges facing that country, in full respect for Timorese choices. Portugal strongly supports the extension of UNMIT's mandate for a further 12-month period, in order that the work for the consolidation of peace, democracy and development in Timor-Leste can be adequately sustained.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): Let me start by addressing to Ambassador Nelson Santos our continued pledge of solidarity and support.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his comprehensive presentation on the situation in Timor-Leste and Mr. Atul Khare and his staff for their dedication in assisting the Timorese Government.

To Ambassador Kumalo, we extend our appreciation for his leadership in conducting the work of the core group.

Brazil strongly condemned the attacks against President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão on 11 February. President Lula has conveyed his heartfelt wishes for a swift and full recovery to President Ramos-Horta, and today I reiterate those wishes.

The attacks on the heads of State and Government of Timor-Leste represent an assault on the democratic institutions of the country. Brazil rejects all forms of violence as a method to settle political differences and reaffirms that only through democracy and dialogue can true reconciliation be achieved. We are confident that the Timorese Government, with the valuable assistance of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), will succeed in maintaining public order and stability in the country. The exemplary manner in which the institutions and the people of Timor-Leste responded to the events of 11 February are praiseworthy.

The United Nations has been playing a pivotal role in the reconstruction of Timor-Leste by providing assistance in several key sensitive sectors, including security. We believe that the United Nations should continue its work in Timor-Leste as long as its presence is required by the Timorese Government in order to consolidate a democratic State and a self-sustaining society. In that regard, Brazil fully agrees with the recommendation made by the Secretary-General that the mandate of UNMIT be extended for one year.

In spite of the many challenges that Timor-Leste still faces, important progress has been made in many areas, such as strengthening democracy and human rights. As mentioned by Mr. Guéhenno and Ambassador Nelson Santos, recent efforts conducted by President Ramos-Horta to promote reconciliation and ensure an inclusive participatory environment are of crucial importance and should be pursued further. We commend the advances made in rebuilding Timorese institutions, especially the police and the judiciary. UNMIT has been able to perform the mandated task of ensuring law enforcement, while also increasing efforts to support the training and institutional development of the national police. As the events of 11 February may suggest, however, further efforts may be necessary in order to ensure general public security.

Many pressing issues remain. The plight of the 100,000 internally displaced people that have to be integrated into society constitutes a serious humanitarian challenge. It also represents a political and security concern. That issue requires immediate attention and a coordinated effort involving national actions as well as international support.

Brazil is fully committed to Timor-Leste's long-term development and stability. The two countries, Brazil and Timor-Leste, have strong ties that go beyond a common language. With over a dozen bilateral cooperation programmes currently in force, Brazil has been assisting Timor-Leste in such areas as education, justice and security. President Ramos-Horta and members of his cabinet, including Minister Zacarias da Costa, paid an official visit to Brazil on 30 January. On that occasion, both heads of State reiterated the shared goals of intensified cooperation between the two countries. One concrete example is the planned training programme for Timorese prosecutors; another relevant initiative is the establishment of a working group to elaborate a draft military penal process code and military penal code for Timor-Leste. During President Ramos-Horta's visit, Brazil also announced a new phase of the training course for the military police in Timor-Leste. A third interesting project that combines security and social development is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. The two Governments signed a memorandum of understanding by which vocational training will be provided at Becora Prison. It will help inmates to develop trade skills that may prove important to their reintegration into society. The establishment of a training centre for prison staff is also envisaged.

The Brazilian Government believes that long-term stability in Timor-Leste requires a sound and comprehensive development programme. As underlined by the Secretary-General, there are high expectations in the Timorese population that solutions will be found to numerous challenges facing the country, including poverty, unemployment and other socio-economic problems. Brazil is determined to be part of a vigorous collective effort, bilaterally and through UNMIT, to assist the Timorese in overcoming such challenges.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on Mr. Guéhenno to respond to the questions posed.

Mr. Guéhenno: At this late hour, I just wish first to place on record the gratitude of the United Nations for the strong commitment of the international community to Timor-Leste, which has been so much in evidence during this meeting. We greatly appreciate the support of the Security Council. We greatly appreciate the support of the neighbours and of all those nations that have spoken this morning and that are so critical to the provision of security as well as development aid to Timor-Leste.

I noted during this meeting how many speakers stressed the importance of political dialogue and consensus in Timor-Leste. Indeed, that dialogue was spearheaded by President Ramos-Horta himself during those meetings of 17 January and 7 February that I mentioned in my briefing. Such political dialogue really is the foundation for the solution both of the short-term issues that we have discussed this morning, such as the internally displaced persons, the petitioners and the fugitives, and of the longer-term challenges, such as security sector reform, the strengthening of the judiciary, and also, of course, as many speakers have stressed, the socio-economic challenges facing Timor-Leste. It is therefore very encouraging to see such a strong consensus here on what is needed in Timor-Leste to continue our partnership with that country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.